Landscape Character Area: Coastal Farmland East of Macduff

Landscape Character Type: The Coastal Farmland; heavily influenced by the proximity of the sea and cultivated wherever possible to the outermost boundaries of the land, despite being exposed and windblown.

Overview
South of the high cliffs which edge the coast between Macduff and Gardenstown lies a small area of rounded hills emerging from the coastal plain. This open landscape has little change in height or definition until it begins to merge with higher ground at its landward boundaries. The area is bleak and windswept, with an almost complete absence of woodland: broad-leaved and coniferous trees only rarely occur in small clumps near farmsteads, or as an occasional shelterbelt or hedge-line. This is a subtle landscape which lacks strong definition.

Coastal Farmland East of Macduff Location:

Key Landscape Features
Landform Small area of rounded hills emerging from the coastal plain. A subtle landscape the topography of which lacks strong definition or emphasis. There is little change in height or definition within the character area until it begins to merge with the higher ground on it landward boundaries.
Vegetation Bleak and windswept, with an almost complete absence of woodland. Broad-leaved and coniferous trees only rarely occur in small clumps near farmsteads, or as an occasional shelterbelt or hedge-line.
Field pattern Large fields are enclosed by post and wire fencing or by broken lines of gorse hedging.
Settlement Limited development, only occasional farmsteads dotted sparsely along narrow tracks that lead off main roads.
Specific Guidance

General
- Development is limited to a few scattered farmsteads dotted along narrow tracks. New development should reflect this sparse settlement pattern.

Screening stands out in largely treeless landscape ✓

Limited development sparsely scattered ✓
Development in dips of hill slopes ✓

Trees and Woodland
- The area is characterised by an absence of woodland and new development that proposes excessive planting should be avoided.
- Occasional clumps of broad-leaf and coniferous trees around farmsteads and dwellings should be replicated in new development. Occasional shelter belts or hedge lines should be used to screen or provide a back drop for development.

Boundaries
- Post and wire fences are the predominant boundary treatment and it may be more appropriate to use this to define boundaries than stone dykes or hedging. In some cases no boundary treatment may be appropriate.
- Occasionally, broken lines of gorse hedging are used to define field boundaries contributing to the characteristic of faintly defined field boundaries.

Dwellings
- Integration of new buildings could be achieved by locating development close to existing buildings, shelterbelts, hedgerows and trees. New dwellings should be located in dips in the hill slopes or the valley bottom.
- Dwellings should be set slightly back from the narrow roads.
- Coniferous hedges and fencing used for plot boundaries are very intrusive and should be avoided.

Abundance of woodland

Absence of woodland

Large fields

Wooden fencing creates too strongly defined boundary ✗

No boundary treatment and limited planting ✓
Landscape Character Area: Eastern Coastal Agricultural Plain

Landscape Character Type: The Coastal Farmland; heavily influenced by the proximity of the sea and cultivated wherever possible to the outermost boundaries of the land, despite being exposed and windblown.

Overview
The low coastal plain is composed of broad sweep of gently undulating land bordering the eastern coast of Banff and Buchan. The area is generally open and wind-swept with constant views of the sea being a feature of this area. The predominance of agriculture along this coastal stretch occasionally gives way to local variations such as at St. Fergus Moss, Rora Moss and the Moss of Cruden, where boggy land and coniferous plantations are interspersed. The general uniformity of the topography has allowed a random network of farmsteads to become scattered across the landscape. Villages such as Hatton, Longside and New Leedes are a legacy from the 19th century.

There is a diverse range of landscapes, from higher and hillier land to the west, through open agricultural plains which typify the farmland of the District, to the wooded estates which line the South Ugie Water. Although visually dissimilar these areas are all landbound and their physical associations are with the interior rather than the coast.

Eastern Coastal Agricultural Plain Location:

Key Landscape Features
Landform Uniformly gently undulating topography has allowed a random network of farmsteads to be scattered across the landscape.
Field Pattern The area is predominantly in agricultural use. Large and open fields with post and wire fencing.
Settlement Random network of frequently scattered farmsteads.
Vegetation Sparsely wooded area with medium sized conifer plantations scattered across area. Broadleaf trees restricted to shelterbelts and groups around farms. Mosses are a feature dotted throughout the area and are often signalled by plantations. Medium-sized blocks of coniferous trees are scattered elsewhere throughout the area, which is in general quite sparsely wooded. Broad-leaved trees are restricted to occasional shelterbelts and groups around farmsteads, or as more substantial fringes on the outskirts of villages.

Undulating landscape (to the south of the area)
Specific Guidance

Dwellings
- Random network of farmsteads scattered across the landscape.
- Range from large farms to small holdings
- Groups of 2-3 houses, often at the roadside are common.
- Integration of new buildings could be achieved by locating development close to existing buildings, shelterbelts, hedgerows and trees.
- The undulating landscape has capacity to accommodate some development.

Boundaries
- Large fields mostly bounded by post and wire fencing.
- Dilapidated stone walls are more prominent to the north of the area.
- Coniferous hedges and fencing used for plot boundaries can be very intrusive in rural locations.

Cottages along roadside to the south of the area is characteristic

Trees and Woodland
- Coniferous plantations are interspersed on boggy land.
- Broad-leaved trees are restricted to occasional shelter belts and groups around farmsteads.
- Wherever possible, new development can be integrated by planting native trees to replicate copses traditionally planted for shelter.

Other
- Mormond Hill is a landscape feature to the northern part of the area.
- Agricultural buildings are common, but vary in size from large farms to small holdings.
Landscape Character Area: North-Eastern Coastal Farmland

Landscape Character Type: The Coastal Farmland; heavily influenced by the proximity of the sea and cultivated wherever possible to the outermost boundaries of the land, despite being exposed and windblown.

Overview
Stretching down from the coast to the village of New Pitsligo and the north-western slopes of Mormond Hill this open, high plateau is of uniformly and gently undulating ground. This area forms a transition in height and landform between the dramatic broken sandstone ridges to the west and the flatter lower eastern coastal plain. The large, open fields of more low-lying agricultural land nearer the coast give way to a more diverse landcover on the slightly higher ground inland where moss and moorland restricts agricultural use. In these parts, the remaining expanses of moorland combine with a small blocks of coniferous woodland, infrequent broad-leaved tree planting, and cultivated fields of crops and rough pasture, to form a more fragmented landscape of varying textures.

North-Eastern Coastal Farmland Location:

Key Landscape Features

Landform High open plateau that is uniformly and gently undulating. Areas of moss and moorland character where agricultural use is restricted due to the poor soil quality.

Vegetation The expanses of moorland, the small blocks of coniferous woodland, the infrequent broadleaf planting, the cultivated fields of crops and rough pasture combine to a fragmented landscape of varying textures.

Field Pattern Large open fields of more low-lying agricultural land gives way to a more diverse land cover on the slightly higher ground inland.

Settlement Widely scattered farmsteads strung out along minor roads are often situated on small hillocks within areas of moss. Occasional derelict and obviously abandoned farmsteads. The hamlets of Mid Ardlaw and Memsie are the only minor settlements in the area.

Other The open nature of the landscape is emphasised by subtle delineation of fences, scrubby gorse boundaries and overgrown stone dykes.
Specific Guidance

Dwellings
- Farmsteads are strung out and scattered along minor roads.
- Farmsteads are often situated on small hillocks within areas of moss and poorly drained land. This pattern should be replicated in new development where it is observed in the area.
- Integration of new buildings could be achieved by locating development close to shelterbelts, hedgerows and trees.
- Abandoned and derelict farmsteads are evident and these present opportunities for redevelopment.
- Dwellings are traditionally of stone construction, with some white washed and these materials should be reflected in new dwellings. Subdued paint colours should be used on woodwork.

Development on raised land within moss:

Muted / natural colours are appropriate for the character area

Boundaries
- A key characteristic of the area is subtle delineation of fences and therefore harled walls, coniferous hedging or suburban fencing looks out of place.
- Beech and hawthorn hedgerows and stone dykes are successful boundary treatments for new development but on occasion post and wire fencing may better reflect the character of the area.

Trees and Woodland
- New development can be integrated with the landscape by planting native trees to replicate copses traditionally planted for shelter.
- Small groups of trees can also help integrate new development with the landscape.
Landscape Character Area: Sandstone Ridges and Valleys South of Troup

Landscape Character Type: The Coastal Farmland; heavily influenced by the proximity of the sea and cultivated wherever possible to the outermost boundaries of the land, despite being exposed and windblown.

Overview
Striking landscape south of the prominent Troup Head that results from the large outcrop of Old Red Sandstone which protrudes north-eastwards to the coast. The character area consists of hilltops and enclosed valleys. The character areas is higher and hillier than the surrounding plains, this dramatic saddle of land has been scoured by glacial melt water to produce an area of ridges, hills and broad valleys.

Key Landscape Features
Landform Distinctly moulded landform of open hill tops and enclosed valleys. It is an area of higher and hillier ground than surrounding plains with ridges, long hills and incised broad valleys, oversize for their watercourse (for example the ravine at Tour of Troup).

Vegetation Woodland confined to the Tore of Troup and a few blocks of coniferous planting such as at Windyheads Hill.

Field Pattern Well farmed landscape although moorland occurs on the steeper slopes and on the hill tops.

Settlement Farmsteads dot the valley infrequently.

Specific Guidance
- The character area is “domestic” in character and is highly sensitive to the intrusion of large scale elements.
- Apart from the south west of the area, where there is a croft like pattern of frequently dispersed small holdings, farmsteads are not common throughout the area. The prevailing pattern of development should be reflected in new development.
- Dwellings are usually located individually and with farm buildings. Fewer groups of dwellings occur within this character area.
- Mixed tree groups occur frequently around farmsteads. Integration of new buildings could be achieved by locating development close to existing shelterbelts and trees.
- The simple form of single - 1½ storey cottages should be adhered to, although modern interpretations can provide attractive living spaces which do not affect landscape character. White wash and stone including sandstone are common finishes/materials.
- Post and wire fencing is a common boundary treatment and this would be appropriate for new development. In some circumstance no boundary treatment may also be acceptable.
Landscape Character Area: Western Coastal Farmland

*Landscape Character Type: The Coastal Farmland; heavily influenced by the proximity of the sea and cultivated wherever possible to the outermost boundaries of the land, despite being exposed and windblown.*

**Overview**
This landscape character area lies to the south of Portsoy. It is a large scale landscape, with sweeping plains rising to infrequently placed rounded hills such as Durn Hill and Hill of Culburnie. Glimpses of the sea are a feature, but the coastal influence is weakened in places by the substantial amount of forestry. Large fields of arable and pasture land and frequent farmsteads are a feature. The only villages of note are the charming 18C village of Fordyce and the long single street farming village of Cornhill distinguished by its heavily pollarded roadside trees.

### Key Landscape Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform</th>
<th>Large scale landscape, with sweeping plains rising to infrequently placed rounded hills. Undulating landform, rises to occasional hills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land-use</td>
<td>Largely an agricultural area with both large fields of arable and pasture farmland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>Blocks of plantations are a feature. To the east of the area, woodland planting reduces the influence of the coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement</td>
<td>Frequent farmsteads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>An awareness of the presence of the sea nearby, particularly from the northern half of the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Guidance

**Dwellings**
- Generally houses are frequently spaced along roads.
- The pattern of dwellings varies between the east and the west of the area but siting should reflect local characteristics.
- Generally to the west, buildings are individually sited and well off the road, although there are occasionally small groups. To the east, closer to Banff, there are more groups of dwellings and a general feeling of a more densely populated area.
- Integration of new buildings can be achieved by locating development close to existing buildings, shelterbelts, hedgerows and trees.
- Occasional groups of terraced houses along the roadside.
- There is less planting around houses than character areas further south, although planting is effective at ensuring new buildings fit in the landscape.

**Trees and Woodland**
- Large scale coniferous planting is a feature of boggier parts (and more prevalent to the west of the area).
- Sweeps of coniferous planting on hillsides can be prominent where they do not follow the landform.
- Deciduous trees are a feature around farmsteads and villages.
- Occasionally woodland clumps can be found on hilltops.
- Particularly to the east of the area, strips of broadleaf trees are a feature.

**Boundary Treatments**
- Post and wire fence are the predominate field boundary.
- Scattered hedges are a characteristic. Where hedges are a feature they should be maintained/enhanced.
- Occasionally stone dykes are present.

**Agricultural Buildings**
- This area consists of more traditional farm units.
- Farm buildings should be cut into the landscape to reduce impact where appropriate.
- Screening of large new agricultural/industrial buildings with embankments is appropriate and should include sensitive planting.
- Long straight roads are a feature, and due to views from these opportunities for large scale buildings are reduced.

- Modern development in middle of field with ‘ranch’ style boundary treatment does not fit with the character.

- Wind turbines
- Views to sea
- Blocks of plantation
- Woodland backdrop

- Large 2 ½ storey dwelling is not in keeping with vernacular style.

- Blocks of plantation woodland

- Opportunity for larger houses to be accommodated with large scale landscape and hillside backdrop.